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ABSTRACT

In 1948, a young and naive Robert Ove arrived at Whitetail, on the Mescalero Apache Reservation, to teach at the Bureau of Indian Affairs day school. Living there were the Chiricahua Apaches--descendants of Geronimo and the survivors of nearly 30 years of incarceration by the U.S. government. With help from Indian historian H. Henrietta Stockel, this book recounts Ove's experiences among the Chiricahuas. The first chapter describes the landscape, community, and residents when Ove first arrived, and how a few residents shared tales of the Indian wars, their lineage, and cultural heritage. The second chapter describes the one-room school where Ove taught kindergarten through sixth grade. The school was more than just an educational institution; it was the focal point of activity for the entire Chiricahua Apache community. It was the dispensary, and had the only telephone and gas pump in the community. It also had a public water tap and an electric generator, and hosted dances, socials, public meetings, and movies. The next two chapters recount some of the history and culture of the Chiricahua and contain biographies of Whitetail residents, some of whom were, or were related to, the great leaders and warriors of Geronimo's time. Insights into Apache religion, ceremonies, justice, and culture in general are given through anecdotes. A 1992 visit to the area and some former students provides some of the stories. Contains references in notes, a bibliography, photographs, and an index. (TD)

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